



State of Connecticut  
CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

TO: Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement  
**Representative Gregory Haddad and Senator Derek Slap, Co-Chairs**

FROM: The Reproductive Rights Caucus  
**Representative Matt Blumenthal and Representative Jillian Gilchrest, Co-Chairs**

DATE: March 2, 2023

RE: **Testimony in Favor of Raised S.B. No. 1108, An Act Concerning Access to Reproductive Health Care By Students at Public Institutions of Higher Education**

Representative Haddad, Senator Slap, Senator Kelly, Representative Haines, Senator Maher, Representative Rochelle, and honorable members of the Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee:

On behalf of the General Assembly's Reproductive Rights Caucus, we thank you for this opportunity to **testify in strong support of one of the Caucus's legislative priorities this session, raised Senate Bill 1108, An Act Concerning Access to Reproductive Health Care By Students at Public Institutions of Higher Education.**

S.B. 1108 will require public higher education institutions with on-campus residences to develop a plan that addresses students' need for reproductive healthcare, including contraception, abortion, and gender-affirming care. **This bill will expand access to vital and life-determining healthcare for young people throughout Connecticut who are studying at our states' public colleges and universities.** This population has a unique set of needs, with their institution often providing most of their necessities, including food, housing, transportation, and healthcare. Additionally, many may be from states where such care is banned or otherwise restricted. Mandating the creation of a plan for reproductive care access is an extension of higher education institutions' responsibility to their students.

This policy is critical because many Connecticut students are burdened with planning and paying for their own transportation to and from reproductive healthcare providers. Research by Julia Renfroe of the Yale School of Public Health<sup>1</sup> shows that **Connecticut college students must travel an average of roughly two hours round-trip on public transportation to access a**

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<sup>1</sup> Julia Renfroe, Master's student, Yale School of Public Health. 2023. See attached Appendix.

**Planned Parenthood location.** This does not include Quinebaug Valley Community College students, who must travel over fourteen hours by public transportation. This is prohibitive for many students, who may not have the time and resources to travel by public transportation, or access to a car or the funds needed for rideshare app transportation, like Uber or Lyft. This bill would ask higher education institutions to consider this burden and use its resources to develop a solution.

In passing this legislation, Connecticut will join California and Massachusetts in increasing access to reproductive healthcare for college students. Both of these states enacted similar bills in the last four years, with California requiring all public colleges and universities stock medication abortion in student health centers, and Massachusetts requiring the same access to medication abortion for larger schools and also requiring smaller colleges to develop a plan for student access to medication abortion. S.B. 1108 gives Connecticut a chance to stand alongside Massachusetts and California in providing equitable access to necessary healthcare for our students.

We in Connecticut have felt the effects of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*. We see the attacks on reproductive healthcare access coming from states across the country. **We must anticipate the coming attacks on reproductive healthcare by ensuring the residents of this state are able to make their own healthcare decisions, as well as access to the care they need and deserve.** S.B. 1108 will provide us with that opportunity by proactively protecting reproductive healthcare access for college students in this state.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this crucial piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matt Blumenthal".

Representative Matt Blumenthal, Co-Chair  
On behalf of the Reproductive Rights Caucus

A handwritten signature in black ink that appears to read "Jillian Gilchrest".

Representative Jillian Gilchrest  
On behalf of the Reproductive Rights Caucus

Appendix:

| <b>Institution Name</b>                    | <b>City/County</b> | <b>Proximity to Abortion Services</b> |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Asnuntuck Community College                | Enfield            | 1.4 miles   26 min                    |
| Capital Community College                  | Hartford           | 1.7 miles   26 min                    |
| Central Connecticut State University       | New Britain        | 3.7 miles   23 min                    |
| Charter Oak State College                  | New Britain        | 4.3 miles   27 min                    |
| Eastern Connecticut State University       | Willimantic        | 1.0 miles   10 min                    |
| Gateway Community College                  | New Haven          | 1.3 miles   24 min                    |
| Housatonic Community College               | Bridgeport         | 4.6 miles   38 min                    |
| Manchester Community College               | Manchester         | 3.8 miles   1hr 1 min                 |
| Middlesex Community College                | Middletown         | 12.7 miles   1hr 33 min               |
| Naugatuck Valley Community College         | Waterbury          | 2.3 miles   38 min                    |
| Northwestern Connecticut Community College | Winsted            | 7.6 miles   5 hr 3 min                |
| Norwalk Community College                  | Norwalk            | 8.1 miles   1h 9 min                  |
| Quinebaug Valley Community College         | Danielson          | 26.9 miles   7hr 39 min               |
| Southern Connecticut State University      | New Haven          | 1.8 miles   48 min                    |
| Three Rivers Community College             | Norwich            | 3.5 miles   1hr 23 min                |
| Tunxis Community College                   | Farmington         | 9.4 miles   1hr 29 min                |
| United States Coast Guard Academy          | New London         | 1.3 miles   10 min                    |
| University of Connecticut                  | Storrs             | 7.5 miles   1hr 15 min                |
| University of Saint Joseph                 | West Hartford      | 2.2 miles   44 min                    |

|                                      |                          |   |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Western Connecticut State University | Danbury                  | 1 mile   21 min   |
| <b>CALCULATIONS</b>                  | <b>TOTAL: 20 schools</b> | <b>Avg dist: 5.31</b><br>....<br><b>Avg time on public transit: 55.4 min</b> (or 78.35 min with Quinebaug included) |